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SCENES

IN

The Work of a Western Pastor.

BY

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Preface.

THERE are facts of thrilling interest constantly occurring, which serve both to illustrate "the ways of God with men," and the ways of man with God. The benefits of these, however, is usually confined to a small circle of those who are personally cognizant of them. There is no pastor of experience who has not seen a multitude of incidents in his ministerial course which are full of instruction to him, as well as of warning and encouragement for others. The knowledge of these, it has often seemed to the author of this volume, ought not to be confined to the small circle amid which they occurred. If published to the world

they might be the means of awakening some individuals to the danger of their sinful course, or of stimulating some hesitating, inquiring soul to more earnest and decisive efforts to escape the wrath to come, or of quickening and cheering ministers and churches in their efforts to do good.

The West, from its peculiar circumstances in regard to population and settlement, is especially rich in such material, and no greater service could be done for religion than to gather it up and spread it before the world.

In this little work the author has given some reminiscences of nearly a quarter of a century's experience as a pastor, and part of the time as a Home Missionary in one of the States west of the Mississippi. During that period he has witnessed the operations of the Holy Spirit and the workings of the Word and Providence of God, in almost every variety of circumstances, in city and village, in mining

town and farming settlement, and has been permitted to labor in numerous revivals of religion among those with which that region has been so richly blessed, and to aid in planting many of the churches which now exist there. He hopes that these unpretending sketches of some of the scenes which have fallen under his own observation, and in which he has been an actor, may interest and benefit those into whose hands this book may fall.

Dubuque, Iowa, April, 1863.

SCENES

IN THE

WORK OF A WESTERN PASTOR.

Prayer for a Revival Answered.

SOON after I was licensed to preach the gospel, I set out from Milwaukee with the agent of the A. H. M. Society, to traverse the State of Wisconsin, from the lake to the Mississippi river, to see the country. This journey, at that early day, was an undertaking of some moment, and was not achieved without difficulty. At length, however, we reached Potosi, on the Missis-

sippi, then a place of considerable importance for trade, but more for its lead mining advantages. On arriving there we found a little circle of Christians, in the midst of one of the most godless communities with which I was ever acquainted, who were earnestly praying for a revival of religion. There had been a small church gathered there some years before as the result of the labors of Rev. Mr. Gallagher, an evangelist from Missouri, who had spent some time in the lead mines of that region, but it was virtually extinct as an organization. It had had no pastor for some time, and there was no house of worship.

These Christians, however, had strong faith in the efficacy of prayer, and though they had no knowledge from whence ministerial help would come, and were few, and of little ability or influence, yet they

believed God could and would in some way fulfil their desires. We knew nothing of the state of things existing in the place, having had no communication with the brethren, and had no plan whatever of laboring there. But no sooner was it known that two ministers of the gospel had arrived in town than the praying ones said at once, God has heard our prayers and has sent us help, and they insisted on our commencing a series of religious meetings without delay. To this we readily assented, although there was little to encourage in outward circumstances, and we saw that drinking, gambling, and all forms of immorality abounded.

The question then arose, where shall we hold our meetings, as there was no house of worship of any kind in the place, and no hall or school house or other room suitable. The brethren cast about and at length found

a vacant store room, situated in the very centre of the village, which they secured the use of, and immediately set to work and fitted it up with a rough speaker's stand and seats, and circulated notice that there would be preaching there every evening. A good congregation gathered, which continued to increase from night to night; and there, surrounded on all sides with gambling and drinking saloons, in a room dimly lighted with candles, but filled with an atmosphere of prayer, we, like Paul and Barnabas, held forth the word of life for upwards of two weeks, alternating with each other in preaching at night, and laboring as we could through the day among the people. The result was, a powerful revival of religion and the conversion of some thirty souls or more, the re-organization of the church, the building of a brick

house of worship, and a great improvement in the morals of the place. And all this was in consequence of the fervent prayers of a few indivduals whose righteous souls, like that of Lot, were vexed by the filthy and profane conversation of the abondoned community in the midst of which they dwelt. Never did I see a plainer answer to prayer, or a more marked interposition of Providence than was manifested in bringing us ministers to that place at the right moment, opening the way for our preaching and crowning that preaching with success.

Let Christians everywhere, and under the most unfavorable circumstances, be encouraged by this example to be earnest in prayer for the revival of God's work. No place is so hopeless that he cannot make it the scene of the glorious displays of his power and grace in answer to prayer.

It may also interest my readers to learn that among that little praying circle in P., to which I have alluded, were Rev. W. A. Boardman and his wife, lately laboring as home missionaries in Los Angelos, California; the first of whom is the author of that book that has interested and benefitted so many, "The Higher Life." He was then a layman, in business in P., but afterwards was licensed to preach, and subsequently entered Lane Theological Seminary, and has been exceedingly useful in the Sabbath School work and the ministry. Who can trace out and estimate all the beneficial results that have flowed, and will flow, from that praying circle of which I have spoken? The revival alluded to was the first in which I ever labored as a minister, and if I have ever done any good since in such scenes, it is owing in great measure to the

influences I then experienced, and the circumstances in which I was so unexpectedly placed at the commencement of my ministry. My fellow laborer was Rev. Stephen Peet, whose memory is fragrant among the churches of Wisconsin, and who did more than any other man to plant the gospel in that State. And this which I have described is one of the many modes in which the Home Missionary Society operates and scatters blessings among the new settlements. The revivals of religion which the agents and missionaries of that Society have been instrumental of promoting, have been inestimable blessings to the West, and have caused many a church to spring up where there was before a spiritual desert. It is to revivals, that not a few churches in that region owe their present strength, as well as their very existence.

Let little bands of believers, even without a minister, be encouraged by this example to pray for such a season of refreshing, and trust the Lord to send them help, and let older churches remember such little flocks on the frontiers, in their prayers as well as by their contributions. "*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*"

Given Over to Strong Delusion.

IN the revival to which I have referred in the foregoing sketch, there was one case which serves to illustrate the great danger of resisting the Spirit's influences, and of experiencing as the result the fulfilment of that terrible threatening of the Scriptures; "*And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should* BELIEVE A LIE: *that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*"

Early in the progress of the meetings, there was one interesting young man, named H——, who was awakened by the truth

and brought under deep and pungent conviction. For days he struggled against the influences which were operating upon him to lead him to repentance. The Spirit strove with him and we had strong hopes that he would come out and separate himself from the world and take up his cross and follow Christ. But he was unwilling to comply with the humbling conditions of the Gospel, and refused to yield, though he continued to be a regular, and deeply thoughtful hearer of the word.

At length, however, in the midst of the work, a Mormon preacher came into the place and began to proclaim the delusive doctrines of that giant imposture. He told the people that their sins could all be washed away by immersion at his hands, and that by embracing his system they would find peace and assurance of God's favor.

The young man to whom I have alluded, resolved to attend and hear this new preacher, and see if he could not gain relief from the crushing sense of guilt and danger which weighed him down, *on easier terms than we insisted upon.* He went and listened to his plans, and finally resolved to try the experiment of seeking to enter into the kingdom of heaven by another way than the strait gate of conversion, which we had held up as the *only* way, on the authority of the Saviour.

He accordingly professed his faith in the doctrines of Mormonism, and one day repaired to the river and was immersed by the preacher for the remission of his sins. As the result, his feelings left him, he came no more to our meetings, and ceased to manifest any further interest in the truth. A few years subsequently I was preaching

for some successive days in the same place, when there was considerable religious interest, but he kept aloof entirely from our services. I learned that he had in the meantime abandoned his belief in Mormonism, and had relapsed into carelessness and irreligion, if not infidelity, and not long after, I heard of his death without his giving any evidence that he had come to Christ. He grieved the Spirit by seeking to avoid the self-denying duties required by the Gospel, and was given over to temporary delusion, to his eternal undoing.

The Delusion of Universalism.

ANOTHER case occurs to me in this connection, that illustrates the same point, where the delusion was Universalism. In another place where I was laboring, in a series of daily religious meetings, there was a man of mature years, who, as I understood, had been religiously educated, who was aroused to a sense of his condition as a sinner, and his need of salvation; but he was unwilling to take Christ's yoke upon him, and thus to find rest. He therefore resorted to the system of Universalism for relief, though he had never been known to have any leaning that way before. He

strove to banish the belief from his mind in the doctrine of future punishment, and at length succeeded, and became an avowed and firm advocate of the doctrine of the final salvation of all men.

From that time he avoided our meetings, exhibited no interest in the work, and was given up of Christians as a hopeless case. The series of meetings closed, leaving him in that state, and thus he continued as long as I knew any thing of him, a confirmed Universalist, nor did he ever seem to be affected by any subsequent revivals in the place. He, too, was evidently given over to "strong delusion to *believe* the lie" of Universalism, because he "believed not the truth," when clearly presented to his mind. From these cases, and others which are continually occurring, we learn that a resort to error is one of the most effective, as it is

also one of the most common means of "quenching the Spirit" in a revival, or at any time when the sinner is awakened.

A few years ago a young man died in New York, in the agonies of despair, exclaiming, "Paine's Age of Reason has ruined my soul!" He confessed that a few years before, he had been awakened in a revival, and felt a deep conviction of sin and duty, but unwilling to yield to the Spirit's influences, he had deliberately purchased Paine's work, and sat down to study it for the express purpose of undermining his faith in God's word, and that he succeeded, drinking in the impious principles of that book, and thus coming under the dreadful delusion which was about sinking him to hell!

Reader, take care how you resort to error to dissipate your convictions. *You*

may succeed and be "damned, because you believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness." Did you ever hear of any person who, on a dying bed, cursed the day he first saw the Bible and embraced its precious truths? Never. But thousands, like this man, have bitterly lamented the day they gave heed to the suggestions of infidelity or error. Not long since, a Presbyterian clergyman, pointing to a certain house, said to me, "In that house died a woman who had tried to satisfy herself with Universalism, after being accustomed to Orthodox preaching, and sent for me in her last hours, and told me in agony of spirit, "Universalism may do in health, but it will *not* do in a dying hour."

The Spirit Grieved.

I WAS once holding a series of religious meetings in a considerable mining village in Wisconsin. Large congregations gathered from evening to evening to hear the word, and there was much interest manifested. The house of worship was situated on an eminence overlooking the town, which was composed mainly of rough board shanties or rude houses. In one dwelling which stood directly in front of the meeting house, lived a widowed mother and several children. Among the latter was a young lady of about eighteen years, I should think, whose attention was aroused to the subject of religion, and who attended the meet-

ings. She was so much awakened that she took her place among the inquirers, and I had strong hopes of her conversion.

Unfortunately she received an invitation to attend a ball at a place about six miles distant, and was urged by her mother, a gay and worldly woman, to attend. She hesitated, however, and rather inclined to remain and attend the meetings, but her mother's persuasions finally prevailed, seconded, perhaps, by a natural love of dancing, and she decided to go to the ball. She went, and in returning home, being rather thinly clad, and more exposed on account of her exertion and exhaustion at the ball, she took cold and was prostrated on a sick bed, and was unable again to leave the house. The meetings continued as she rapidly declined. The friends would not allow me to be sent for to see her for

fear of hindering her recovery, and there the poor girl was suffered gradually to pine away without religious instruction, within a stone's throw of the place of worship, and in a few days to die almost within the sound of my voice. *She passed away without a hope, and before the series of meetings, closed I preached her funeral sermon in the very house where she was so near, a few days before, giving her heart to God.*

Never can I forget the scene as her corpse was brought in her coffin, and laid upon the table in front of the pulpit. Her weeping mother and other friends sat in the front seats, and a large congregation filled the house, while I stood in the pulpit where I had a few days before addressed her, and endeavored to improve the occasion for the warning of others who might be halting between two opinions, and in danger of griev-

ing the Holy Spirit. This fact suggests several reflections:

1st. How near persons may be at some time to entering the kingdom of heaven and yet be lost.

2d. How dangerous, when the Spirit is striving with an awakened sinner, to yield to the solicitation of friends to indulge in amusements that may grieve him from the heart. "*Quench not the Spirit.*"

3d. How thoughtless and hard-hearted that parent, that can persuade a child to neglect the means of grace for the sake of worldly pleasure, when the attention is directed to the salvation of the soul.

4th. There is scarcely any other means so effectual for grieving the Spirit, as attendance upon a gay ball or party in the midst of a revival of religion.

5th. Resistance of the Holy Spirit is

often followed by sudden death. The declaration, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man," was made just before the deluge came and swept away the whole guilty race to whom Noah preached, and whom he urged to forsake their sins, and with whom the Spirit strove.

"To-day is Wisdom's voice
To-morrow, Folly cries;
And still to-morrow 'tis, when oh!
To-day the sinner dies!"

The Power of Evil Habit.

DURING the progress of a work of grace in my own congregation, I one evening noticed, unexpectedly, a young married man among those who presented themselves as special subjects for prayer, who seemed much distressed. At the close of the exercises he earnestly requested me to call at his house the next day for personal conversation. I made an appointment with him, and on repairing to the place I found him manifesting deep concern about his spiritual condition. I urged him *then* and *there* to submit himself, wholly and unconditionally, to Christ, and to close in with the offers of the Gos-

pel, and at his request prayed with him. I could not, however, succeed in my aim. There seemed to be some insurmountable obstacle in the way.

At length, after probing him as thoroughly as possible, he made the following statement. Said he, "I have been a very profane man,"—he was addicted to no other open vice that I knew of,—"swearing," he continued, "has become with me an invincible habit, and I *cannot* cast it off. I know it is wrong, and am convinced that I can never become a Christian while I indulge in it, but *I have no confidence that I can overcome the habit.* Last night I resolved to try the experiment. I determined to go forth on the morrow and see whether I could by the greatest watchfulness, and the most earnest effort, go through the day without an oath. If I should, I felt that there

would be hope; but if I failed, that I must give up in despair of ever becoming a Christian. I accordingly went to my place of business prepared to guard against this habit, but I had scarcely begun the business of the day when something occurred to irritate me, and I immediately broke forth in oaths, as usual, and all my good resolutions were scattered to the winds, and I now see that it is useless for me to undertake to lead a consistent Christian life."

I saw his error and pointed it out to him, and pressed him to cast himself on Christ for strength and help, and by an entire consecration of himself, in faith, to Him, to secure all needful grace. But my endeavors were all vain. He was conscious of the power of evil habit; he had tried the experiment of conquering it, and failed; and

he could not be inspired with confidence or hope by anything I could say, and I left him still in great distress of mind. He continued to attend the meetings, but his interest gradually declined, and the revival closed, leaving him still without hope, and he has, I believe, remained thus to this day, and will probably die in his sins. From this example we may learn several things:

1st. How great is the power of evil habit. Here was a man under deep conviction of sin, and fully persuaded that his eternal salvation depended on his abandoning a vice to indulge in which he had become accustomed, and yet he could not break away from its chains. And his was a habit not involving some of the difficulties of reformation which are so great with others, as for instance, licentiousness, or intemperance or dishonesty. There was no sensual

appetite formed by it, and no passion of the soul enlisted to plead for its indulgence, and yet it was invincible.

2d. Profanity, though so common, and regarded as so trifling compared with some gross immoralities, as intemperance, lewdness, &c., is yet one of the most *dangerous* vices. The habit is thoughtlessly formed, but when once fixed is one of the most difficult to eradicate. It blunts the moral sensibilities, undermines reverence for God, is heaven-daring in its nature, and often results, as in the case referred to, in the ruin of the soul.

3d. *One single immorality*, habitually indulged, may be *the* effectual barrier to becoming a Christian. It was, so far as we can see, in the case referred to. Nothing else seemed to stand in that man's way, but he felt that he was a slave to *this* vice,

and having sought to break away from it in vain, he lost all courage, and all confidence in the possibility of his salvation, and gave up his attempt to become a Christian, in despair. He labored under an error, it is true, as to *what* he ought to do, but still *this habit* blinded his mind and discouraged him, and prevented him from persevering in his efforts.

4th. We see from this case the error of the sinner who tries to become holy by endeavoring *to break off one sin after another.* This is often the vain attempt of men under religious awakening and conviction. They do not see that, as in the reformation of the drunkard, *total abstinence* is the only remedy; that while they continue to indulge in *any* form of sin, there is no radical change of moral character, no effectual breaking up of the *habit of sin.* There must be an

honest and thorough renunciation of *all* sin, or there is no change of heart, and can be no permanent reformation.

5th. This case shows us the folly of seeking to become a Christian merely by outward reformation. Many put forth their own strength in efforts to break off sin and fail. The power of habit and temptation is too strong. They err in thinking they must overcome their evil propensities *before they come to Christ*, instead of *coming to Christ* IN ORDER TO CONQUER THEM. The man referred to made this mistake. He should have cast himself on Christ by faith and sought his help, and then *His* grace would have been sufficient for him. "Without me," said the Saviour, "ye can do no nothing;" but says Paul, "I can do all things through Christ which *strengtheneth me.*" "Who shall deliver me from the body of

this death? I thank God *through Jesus Christ my Lord.*" It is beginning at the wrong end to seek to reform in order to come to Christ and be a Christian. The sinner must come to the Saviour in order to be delivered from his sins. "His name shall shall be called Jesus," or the Saviour, "*for* he shall deliver his people *from their sins.*"

6th. Let the young beware of forming *any* evil habit. It may cost them their souls. No matter how common it is; no matter how comparatively unimportant it is, if it is a habit of violating God's law, and the dictates of conscience, it may one day stand up and dispute the passage, when they seek to enter the strait gate and narrow way, and may effectually keep them out.

Lastly, we see clearly how much easier it is to become a Christian in early than in

later life. The young are not usually so completely bound in the chains of evil habit as those of more advanced years. And hence one grand reason why the vast majority of Christians become such in early life. "*Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good*, THAT ARE ACCUSTOMED TO DO EVIL." "They that seek me early shall find me."

Sin Found Out.

SOME years ago, during a series of religious meetings in a mining village in Wisconsin, a striking illustration was afforded of the effect of open sin in church members in hindering a work of grace. A large and increasing congregation, completely filling the meeting house, assembled evening after evening to hear the word dispensed, and there was every indication of the deepest interest on the part of the audience in the truth. But for a long time there was no decided effects produced in the way of conversions. There was the tearful eye, the anxious countenance, the hushed stillness

that characterizes revival services, and every indication of the presence of the spirit of God, save one. Not an individual could be induced to take any step indicating his *present* determination to seek to become a Christian, or his desire for the special prayers of God's people. There was *conviction*, but not *conversion*; nor were there any avowed inquirer after the way of salvation.

At length the scene witnessed night after night became too painful to be endured. I was satisfied that there was some obstacle to the progress of the work unknown to me, that must be taken out of the way, and made up my mind that it was in the church. I therefore one evening appointed a meeting for the next morning, to be composed exclusively of Christians, and on their assembling I told them that it was my con-

viction that there was some sin unrepented of in some of the members of the church, that was known in the community, and that unless it was confessed and put away there would be no blessing on the effort then in progress for the salvation of sinners; and I called upon them then and there to clear their skirts of guilt.

It was a solemn moment, and there was for a brief space of time a breathless silence, when at length an officer of the church arose and said, that he feared that he and his two partners, also church members, were the Achans in the camp. "We have, said he, "a livery stable, and we have been in the habit of letting horses and carriages on the Sabbath, and keeping our office open on that day. The people know this, and I fear our inconsistency has grieved the Spirit of God, and been a stumbling block to sin-

ners, and I desire to remove this difficulty out of the way of the progress of God's work. His partners at once expressed the coincidence of their views and feelings with his.

I then asked them if they were willing to make a similar confession before the congregation in the evening. They said they were; and it was arranged that one of them should do so in behalf of all. Accordingly in the evening, just before the sermon, one of them arose and told the audience how they felt, announced that henceforth no more secular business would be done by them on the Lord's Day. The effect was remarkable and immediate. The truth seemed that night clothed with new power, and at the close of the discourse, I invited all who were anxious about their souls and desired the prayers of Christians,

to come forward and manifest it, when no less than twenty or thirty persons embraced the opportunity. It was a thrilling scene. It seemed as if the waters of salvation long pent up had now broken forth. Christians were melted, the impenitent were touched, earnest prayer mingled with confession and thanksgiving was offered, and from that hour the work of conversion went on and blessed results were witnessed.

The case affords,

1. An illustration of Matt. 23 : 13. "Ye shut up the kingdom of Heaven against men : For ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them *that are entering* to go in." What a fearful responsibility for a professor of religion to assume.

2. We see from this case why so many efforts to promote revivals of Religion fail. There are open sins among church members

that prejudice sinners, grieve the Holy Spirit, and hinder the efficacy of truth, and prevent answers to prayer. God, by Ezekiel, spake of "the iniquity of his people being their stumbling-block. 7 : 19, also 14 : 3. "These men have put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their face : should I be inquired of at all by them?" In subsequent verses He says, that those who "put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their face and come to inquire of the prophet, I the Lord, will answer them myself. I will set my face against that man and *make him a sign and proverb*"

3. We may see what is the duty of Christians when the gospel is preached in vain, and there are no conversions, or when they desire a revival of religion. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord make his paths straight." "Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling block

out of the way." The great hindrance to the conversion of sinners at all times, when the gospel is faithfully preached, and *the* great obstacle to a revival of religion, is the sins of God's professed people. They should therefore search their hearts, repent and have restored unto them the joy of God's salvation; then may they "teach transgressors God's way, and sinners shall be converted unto Him."

4. A revival of religion is a searching time for Christians. It is one of the blessed results of such a season that it brings hidden iniquity to light and purifies the church. It is a terrible ordeal, but beneficial beyond all expression. Christian, are you living in the indulgence of any known sin? "be sure your sin will find you out," when God begins to revive his work. *If you would avoid such an experience as I have described, avoid all known sin.*

"Where'er we seek him he is found,
And every place is holy ground."

I WAS once invited to assist a home missionary in a series of religious meetings, in a mining town in Wisconsin, under peculiar circumstances. Although it was a considerable village, yet there was neither meeting house, school house, hall or other room large enough to accommodate a congregation such as might be expected to gather, with the exception of a spacious *nine-pin alley*. To the astonishment of everybody, and especially of the minister, the owner of that building, which joined his liquor saloon, without solicitation, offered the use of it for a protracted meeting as long as it might be needed; and that, too, gratuitously, al-

though it was bringing him in an income often of ten dollars a day.

The offer was gladly accepted and immediate arrangements were made for its occupancy. On my arrival at the place I was conducted to this novel house of worship, which I found fitted up with seats made of rough boards, arranged across the alley nearly the whole length of it. At one end a *billiard table* was placed in a position for a desk, while in one corner, behind the speaker's stand, were piled up the pins and balls. It was well lighted and warmed, and on the whole constituted quite an inviting audience-room, and when, as soon came to be the case, it was filled with attentive listeners, and pervaded by a spirit of true devotion, the original design of it was entirely forgotten.

Here were held meetings for preaching

every evening, and for prayer and conference, and inquiry during the day, for more than two weeks, and the Spirit of God condescended to be present and render them profitable and delightful seasons, seasons which will be remembered by some probably, in eternity among the most precious ever enjoyed on earth. Frequently we could hear conversation and the noise of the toddy-stick in the saloon adjoining, separated from us only by a thin board partition, but so deeply interesting were our services, that these incongruous sounds did not disturb us or divert attention from eternal things. Seldom have I enjoyed such services more, or seen more marked effects from them.

During the progress of these meetings there were many hopeful conversions—the exact number I do not remember—and it is

an interesting and suggestive fact, that among the converts was the son of the proprietor of the building in which we met. At the close of the series of meetings a church was formed, and the record in the church book states that it was "organized on — day of — in Mr. —'s Ninepin Alley." Subsequently a house of worship was erected in the place for this congregation. The minister, now deceased, and "whose sun went down while it was yet day," was afterwards called to a more important field, and was succeeded for a time by one who is now one of the ablest and most popular preachers in Iowa.

On another occasion I was called to aid a ministerial brother in a protracted meeting, in a considerable farming settlement where there was no church organization and no

house of worship. The school-house being too small, it was decided to hold the services in a large *barn*, the weather being favorable. There, day after day, we preached, the people occupying the barn floor, and when that became too strait, resorting to the hay mows and bays adjoining. Here, too, we enjoyed the presence of God, and a delightful work of grace was witnessed.

As the result of these services there were conversions of some fifteen heads of families, including several substantial farmers, and one old man of about seventy years of age. Never shall I forget the very great interest which centered on this last named case. The man was prominent in society, and had long held out against the influence of the means of grace, though a respecter of religion, and when he finally bowed to

Christ and took up his cross to follow Him, the feeling was intense.

A church was soon after organized in the settlement and a pastor settled. A good house of worship has since been erected, and there is now established there one of the most flourishing rural congregations Sin the tate, with an excellent and beloved pastor, who has resided there many years. And all this was traceable to this special effort, under God, to secure a revival of religion.

I have recited these facts because, it seems to me, they are adapted to encourage those who are seeking to do good, and because they afford several important lessons.

First, they illustrate the truth of the lines which I have prefixed to this article for a motto. God may be found any where and at any time when we "search for him

with our whole hearts," and He is ready to bless honest efforts to do good in the most apparently unfavorable circumstances.

We need no consecrated temple, with its "storied windows," and architectural and artistic ornaments, nor even the conveniences of an ordinary church edifice, in order to enjoy an ordinary revival of religion. Every place is sanctified by prayer. None is in itself any holier than another. We may make any place "none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven."

Secondly, let no one whose heart yearns for a season of "refreshing from the presence of the Lord," be deterred from making an effort to secure it because of discouragements. God can take obstacles out of the way, and even put it into the hearts of wicked men to furnish facilities for advancing His cause and saving souls.

Thirdly, We can never know how great will be the results of the humblest and least promising efforts to do good. There was little in the arrangements for the meetings referred to that augured any very marked effects, and yet two churches sprang into existence from them, and many souls were saved, over whom angels rejoiced. "*He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless return again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.*"

A Test of Submission.

IN a series of religious meetings connected with a Revival of Religion in which I was engaged some years since in a city, in the neighborhood of the place of my residence, the practice was adopted of inviting at the close of the sermon, all who desired to be made special subjects of prayer, or would thus signify their determination to devote themselves to God, to come forward and occupy certain designated seats, that they might be known and receive appropriate instruction. The interest was very great, and a large number of persons of all classes were awakened, and many converted.

But there was one man of middle age, a merchant, occupying a prominent position in society, who, though deeply affected night after night by the preaching, yet refused to make any public demonstration of his feelings, and especially by accepting the invitation alluded to, to range himself among the "inquirers." At length, unable to endure his distress of mind and finding no relief, he came to my room one day, just before the hour for public service, and desired an interview with me. He was evidently in great anguish of soul.

He sat down much agitated, and said, "Mr. H., I am in trouble. I desire to become a Christian, and believe I am willing to do any thing that I can see to be my duty, but I can never come out publicly and take my seat among the inquirers, nor do I believe it to be necessary."

I at once saw that he was unwilling to humble himself—for he was a very proud man, and possessed of much self-respect—and I knew that it was indispensible that he should yield this point. I replied, therefore, that I did not suppose the taking any particular seat would make him a Christian of itself, nor would any other external act, "But," I added, "if you would become a Christian, you must in some way indicate to the world that you are determined to forsake sin and give yourself to God, and the taking that seat happens to be the mode adopted here for that purpose."

"But," said he, "I am prejudiced against it, and opposed to it, and I never can consent to do it."

"No," I replied, "it is not your prejudice or opposition to this particular act that stands in your way, but it is your *pride* and

your *unwillingness to do what the taking of that seat indicates.* You would have had the same objection to rising in your pew, or attending an inquiry meeting, if one of those tests had been adopted here. You must give up that point or find no relief."

He protested, however, that it was not pride that hindered his coming to Christ, but said he never could come to that seat.

"Very well," I answered, "I feel confident that you do not know your heart, and that *in existing circumstances* you will find no satisfaction until you comply with this test. I cannot relieve you."

He left me without finding any comfort, and went to the meeting, and when the call was made for inquirers he again refused to comply with it, and thus he continued to do for several successive evenings, all

the while experiencing the same distress of mind, yet insisting that he desired to become a follower of Christ. At length the pressure upon him became so great that he could hold out no longer; and one night, when the usual invitation was issued, he threw open his pew door and was one of the very first to rush to the inquirers' seat, and no sooner had he done this than he was melted and became as a little child. His pride vanished and he was ready to do any thing.

He very soon indulged a hope and gave evidence of sound conversion, and subsequently joined the church. He proved to be a devoted and consistent Christian, and was one of the most prominent among the founders of an O. S. Presbyterian church in that city, was elected a Ruling Elder in it, and died some years afterwards in the triumphs of faith.

This case illustrates the importance of decision in religion, and also the deceitfulness of the heart. This man had no idea that his pride hindered his becoming a Christian, and he sought refuge under a plea of "prejudice" against a particular mode of testifying his willingness to confess his sins and his consecration to Christ, and had he not yielded this point and subdued his pride, he probably would have found no relief from his mental anguish. When a sinner is really in earnest in the work of salvation he will shrink from no reasonable test, and he will find his pride and opposition of heart rising up against *any thing* that forms such a test of his humiliation and submission—against any act that requires him to confess his anxiety before the world and his determination to yield to Christ's claims. Had he been ex-

cused from the trial which was before his mind, he would, it is very likely, have professed conversion without humiliation and genuine submission, and have entered the church a self-deceived man. I know such tests are objected to by some as unwise and tending to divert the mind of the sinner from the duty of coming to Christ, and establishing something else. But did not our Saviour himself use tests? Did he not prescribe one to the Young Ruler, and did not his refusal to comply with it reveal his insincerity?

Conversion of a Swearer.

ABOUT ten miles from the place of my residence, there was, some fifteen years ago, a very godless mining settlement. It was in a rough and broken region, in a dense wood, very inaccessible, and almost as much isolated as if it had been in the neighborhood of the Rocky Mountains. There was no church there, and but little good moral influence. At the request of a few individuals, I commenced holding a series of meetings there with a view to promote a revival of religion. Part of the time I preached in a "cabin," and part of the time in the open air, with a lumber wagon for my pulpit. The result was the

conversion of quite a number of persons, the formation of a church, and the erection of a cheap, stone house of worship. One of the members of my church started a Sabbath school there, which he has continued to attend ever since, and which has been productive of much good.

But there was one case of conversion in the meeting referred to, that was singular and interesting. It was of a miner who was most shockingly profane. The truth preached seized upon his conscience, and he became much concerned about his soul. One day on leaving the meeting he went home to his cabin very thoughtful, not knowing what to do. He sat down and pondered, and at length, as he afterwards said in his examination for church membership, he suddenly jumped up and exclaimed, "I swear I will become a Christian,"

and suiting the action to the word, he fell on his knees and called on God for mercy, and consecrated himself to his Saviour. He joined the church, having given up his evil habits, led a consistent life, and after some years died with a cheering hope of eternal life.

This was a curious instance of the power of habit. He meant no harm by his singular oath, but it was his accustomed mode of expressing strong determination, and decision of purpose, and it was probably his last indulgence in the sinful practice of profane swearing. God accepted his sincere repentance, and he became as earnest in religion as he had been in wickedness.

Keeping Back Part of the Price.

AN incident connected with a revival of religion some years ago in which I was preaching, shows why awakened sinners do not sometimes find relief from their distress of mind, when they think they have done all that is required of them.

A well-to-do and intelligent farmer and his wife, who lived some miles distant from the place of meeting, had been in attendance regularly for some days, and had been thoroughly awakened. Night after night they returned home at the close of the services, and united in prayer, and sought

to find peace, but in vain. They could gain no evidence of acceptance with God.

At length on reaching their house one night, the man took his Bible to read aloud before engaging in prayer with his wife, when he happened to open to the fifth chapter of Acts, where the account is given of Ananias and Sapphira, on reading which the thought flashed into his mind that it gave the clue to their own difficulty, and he exclaimed, "Wife, I see now where the trouble is with us. We have not made a whole, heartfelt and entire surrender of ourselves to Christ. *We have kept back part of the price*, while professing to give up all to him. Let us now fall down before God and yield up everything for Christ."

They accordingly did so, and there unreservedly consecrated themselves to the Saviour, and both rose from their knees feeling peace.

The next morning they came to the place of worship, with faces radiant with joy, related publicly their experience, and from that time onward they continued to be devoted followers of Christ. The man not long after died, with "a hope which was an anchor to his soul."

Sinners often are not conscious of the reserves they make in professedly dedicating themselves to Christ, and wonder why they cannot gain assurance of pardon.

It is not until one is willing to forsake *all* for him, that he will or can accept him and speak peace to his soul. Any reserve vitiates the professed act of dedication.

No Time for Religion.

"Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away."

WHAT a remorseless interrupter of human plans and enterprises is death! How often is the pastor called to notice projects of gain, ambition, learning, pleasure, cut short by his attacks, and one and another surprised in the midst of devotion to the world by the summons to enter upon that other and endless state of existence for which no preparation has been made.

O Time, how few thy value weigh:
How few will estimate a day !
Days, months and years are rolling on,
The soul neglected and undone.

In painful cares or empty joys,
Man's life its precious hours destroys;
Whilst death stands waiting at his side,
Eager to stop the living tide.

A case of the kind alluded to, occured in my congregation a few years since, which is full of instruction. A young man who had graduated at Yale College and studied law, came to the city where I resided, and entered upon the practice of his profession. He had more than ordinary intellectual ability, and a vast fund of energy and ambition. He was a regular attendant on my ministry on the Sabbath, but through the week gave himself up to the business of his profession. His industry and talents

soon procured for him an extensive and valuable practice, and he was evidently on the high road to eminence at the bar, and to the possession of wealth.

My attention was at length specially directed to him, and my interest excited for his religious welfare. I saw the importance to himself, to society, and to the cause of Christ that he should be led, if possible, to consecrate his powers and his influence to the Saviour, and I studied how I might best approach him to urge his duty in this respect upon him by personal conversation.

I finally concluded to open the way by asking him to read a little tract entitled, "A Few Thoughts by a member of the Bar, addressed to those of his own Profession," which seemed to be adapted to his case, and I supposed would interest him.

Putting this in my pocket one day, I

called at his office and found him busy at his desk writing. I therefore declined his invitation to sit down, telling him I saw he was engaged and would not interrupt him, and taking the tract from my pocket and presenting it to him, I told him that I was feeling a special interest in his spiritual condition, and asked him if he would oblige me by reading that little work by one of his own profession, at his leisure, and I would call upon him again when he was less occupied with business.

Never shall I forget the effect. He was ordinarily a perfect gentleman in his intercourse with others, and had always treated me with the greatest respect. But now, with a look of deep displeasure, and a scornful curl of the lip, he seized the tract, and threw it upon his desk, and replied hastily, "I'm very busy now. The court

is in session, and I am employed on one side or the other in every case upon the docket. *I have no time to attend to that subject now*,"—and resumed his occupation.

I apologized for interrupting him, telling him I was not aware he was engaged, and that I had no intention of trespassing on his time *then*, but only designed to ask him to read the tract when not otherwise employed, which I still hoped he would do. I then withdrew and left him to become again absorbed in his legal pursuits. He was then apparently as well as ever he had been in his life.

Two or three days afterwards he was suddenly seized with an acute disease, accompanied with agonizing pains, which prostrated him at once, and when I called to see him he was nearly unconscious, and so rapidly did his strength fail and his life

ebb, that before he could make any preparation for his great change it was upon him. Death did not defer to his engagements, or wait for a leisure hour for an answer to his summons, but hurried him away in the midst of all his cares and occupations. In less than a week, I think, from the day on which I called to see him at his office, and when he told me he had no time to attend to spiritual concerns, he was in his grave, and I preached his funeral sermon from Job 17 : 11, "My days are past, *my purposes are broken off*, even the thoughts of my heart,"—a large congregation gathering on the occasion, including members of the bar.

Ah, men have no time, they think, for religion, but they *have* time to *die!* No matter how busy, they can stop at the call of death. No matter how important the

occupations in which they are engaged to themselves or others, they *can* all be suspended when he enters the door. How strange that with such innumerable instances before them of the uncertainty of life, men will give any thing and every thing else precedence to religion in their attention. Time seems only valuable to them as they can employ it in securing some worldly end.

Was it for this ye mortal race,
Your Maker gave you here a place?
Was it for this, His thoughts designed,
The frame of your immortal mind?

For nobler cares, for joys sublime,
He fashioned all the sons of time:
Pilgrims on earth, but soon to be
The heirs of immortality."

It is a glorious thing to die.

A FEW years ago, a young man, a member of the Congregational church of which the writer is pastor, lay dying in his room in the principal hotel of the city of his residence. The circumstances of his case were quite remarkable, and excited great interest in the community. He was a merchant, and connected with one of the principal houses of the city, and in him were combined in an eminent degree (which some are disposed to think is impossible) the characters of an active and successful business man, and a consistent, devoted Christian. As a merchant he stood very

high, and after his death a meeting was held of the class to which he belonged, and very complimentary resolutions were passed in respect to him, with one to attend his funeral in a body. As a Christian he occupied a prominent position, and had the respect and confidence of the whole church and community. He was firm in the faith, steadfast in his piety, and ever conscientious in duty, never being absent, unnecessarily, from any of the meetings for worship, and always being ready to take an appropriate part in any of the services, and to meet his full share of responsibility. In short, he clearly demonstrated in his example and experience, that religion and worldly duties do not conflict with each other, and that it is possible to be "not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

He had not been sick for fifteen years, nor had he, as he said, known what pain was. At the period to which I have referred, he was seized very suddenly with acute *pneumonia*, and died in five days. Early in the morning of the day of his death he was told by his physicians that he was near his end, but he was not in the least agitated or alarmed. His pains had been very sharp, but they now all ceased; his mind which had at times been somewhat bewildered, became clear and even brilliant, and so continued until about noon, when he began to sink under physical weakness into unconsciousness, and about three o'clock his spirit took its flight from earth.

All the forenoon he was able to converse freely, his intellect showing much vigor. He spoke of death and heaven with great

delight. It soon became noised abroad, that he was in a remarkable frame of mind, and this led great numbers of citizens to visit him. And it was a most impressive scene. He addressed all who approached his bedside, and among them were many irreligious persons, and even professed infidels, and it was remarkable to notice the discrimination and fitness of his remarks to different individuals.

He frequently said, in the most calm and cheerful manner, as one and another acquaintance drew near, "Well, here you see me about to die. IT IS A GLORIOUS THING TO DIE." He expressed his sense of dependence on the Lord Jesus Christ, and manifested not a shadow of a doubt as to his future prospects. He often said, "I would not live if I could." Alluding to the scene in "Pilgrim's Progress" where

Christian is represented as crossing the river of death, he remarked, "I am in the middle of the stream, and if there were a boat to bear me back to the shore I would not get in." And all this was said, not by a misanthrope or a disappointed worldling, who had nothing to live for, or by one in the decrepitude of age who could have had no expectation of future years on earth, but by a young man, who had enjoyed vigorous health, who was in prosperous business, and possessed of all the comforts of life, with a large circle of relatives and acquaintances, and who was universally esteemed wherever known; who, in a word, had every inducement to wish to cling to life, that is ordinarily presented to men. Notwithstanding all these advantages he felt that to him to die would be gain. His last message to the church was to hold fast

the truth and to be faithful to duty, and especially in attendance on the prayer meetings.

Such was the end of this excellent young man. The sensation produced in the community was very great. The scene in that chamber will never be forgotten by multitudes, as the door stood open for hours, and one after another, a great number in all, passed in and out to see and to hear what was transpiring, as he lay and testified to the grace of God, the value and importance of religion, and the glorious hope of the Christian.

And now we see first, *the power of faith.* What was it that made it, to this young man, such "a glorious thing to die?" It was the prospect opened up to him beyond the grave, of a higher and nobler sphere of existence on which he was about to enter.

"Faith" was to him "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen," What but the Gospel ever produced such a dying scene?

Secondly, we see how much good a real Christian may do in his last hours. This young man had been useful, but probably all he had ever done would not compare in its effects on the community where he lived and died, with the influence he exerted on his dying day. He did more, apparently, in that city to impress men with the reality and divinity of his religion, than he could have done in a long life *such as many Christians spend on earth.*

Thirdly, we see the importance of attaining "*the full assurance of hope*" before the dying hour. Had this individual been content with such a hope as many rest in, and been compelled to spend his last day in

making his own "calling and election sure," that impressive and instructive scene in his chamber would never have been witnessed. His own assurance had been gained long before, and he had now nothing to do but to seek to benefit others, and to exhibit an example of peace—nay, triumph—in his last moments that was most salutary and impressive. Many Christians, not to say most, would have been absorbed with their own concerns in such a position, or would have distressed spectators by the manifestations of anxiety, doubts and fears.

Fourthly, we see the connection between a consistent Christian life and a happy death. Such dying scenes do not often follow an inconsistent life. But besides this, it is a godly and devoted life that gives *emphasis* to such a death as has been described. Every body who knew this young

man, felt that such an end was fit and appropriate to such a life as his, and there was no drawback to the force of his example and testimony.

And lastly, this case affords an illustration of the folly of hoarding up the gains of business. This young man was liberal in life, and he laid up his treasure in heaven; whereas had he selfishly retained his money as multitudes do, to be enjoyed in future years on earth, he would have been disappointed and lost it all, for those years he was not destined to see. In him was exemplified that saying as to a benevolent man in ancient times after his death, "*What he retained he lost; what he gave away he saved.*" The bulk of his possessions he exported before him to heaven, and now he has gone there to enjoy it.

The next sketch will describe a very different dying scene.

"Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

IN the winter of 1849–50, a young man who was an entire stranger to me, called at my house and desired a private conference with me. I invited him to my Study, where, with considerable agitation, he unbosomed to me his feelings.

He said he was suffering under deep conviction of sin, and remorse for his past course of life, and that he earnestly desired to forsake his evil practices and to become a Christian. His father was a clerk in the Treasury Department at Washington, and he, himself, had been once a cadet at West Point. He was evidently possessed of fine

native talents, but unfortunately had become addicted to habits of dissipation, the means to indulge which had been too liberally furnished by his father, whose only son he was. After leading a reckless life for some time, he had come here and entered a law office for the study of that profession. But recently his attention had been awakened to his guilt and the danger of his course, and he had been seriously thinking on the subject of religion and had come to me for assistance and advice.

I conversed with him some time and prayed with him, urging him also to confess his sins to God, and repent of them, and then and there to accept the offers of the Gospel and consecrate himself to Christ. I then advised him to attend our weekly prayer meeting, which was to be held that evening, and to take the opportunity which

it would offer to speak and declare his feelings and ask the prayers of the church. He did so, and was made the object of special prayer. A few days subsequently he attended a meeting in the Methodist church, and went forward to the "mourners' bench," and professed to be converted, and for a short time seemed to be very earnest in the discharge of religious duties.

But alas! he had previously gone too far in the ways of sin ever to retrace his steps and be saved. His habits had become riveted upon him. He was the slave of passion, and he could not burst the fetters that bound him. His appetite for intoxicating drink returned, and he was overcome of temptation, and again was the victim of remorse and shame. His nobler and better feelings were not eradicated. His sense of honor and propriety was outraged, and he

could not endure the condemnation and contempt of the community for having violated his pledge and disgraced himself and dishonored religion, and he abandoned all hope of reformation and yielded to despair!

He embarked on a steamer in the afternoon that was going up the river to Potosi, to return at night, and what were his feelings and occupations during the few hours of his absence, may be gathered from what subsequently transpired. Just before the boat reached our levee on its return, about twelve o'clock at night, he ascended to the "hurricane deck," and there, as remote as possible from observation, he deliberately blew out his own brains with a pistol! The pilot remembered hearing the report, but was not alarmed, and his body was not found until morning after the steamer was in port.

When he was found weltering in blood, his pistol lay beside him and also an empty vial that had contained laudanum which it was supposed he had taken to make sure the work of death. Beside him also, fastened to the deck with his penknife blade, were found letters, one of them addressed to his father, and three to acquaintances in this city. The following is an extract from one of the latter, in which I have emphasized some of the passages:

"I am about meeting the penalty imposed by my own judgment on him who brings disgrace on the name of God. I feel that I cannot quit this tiresome life without a fond lingering thought of those I dearly love. . . Should a reason be asked for my course," [in committing suicide,] "I assure you on the honor of a dying man, I have no other motive than to leave a world, *which the de-*

struction of self-respect by my own inconsistent course, has rendered hateful to me. No being on earth could have prevented it. I can never feel myself worthy of possessing such an object as I could love, and as to floating only as a bubble on life's ocean, I had rather rest on the bed of one of earth's rivers. SUCH A LIFE, [of mere worldly pleasure,] I CAN TRULY STATE, AFTER FULL EXPERIENCE, IS ONLY ONE CONTINUED SCENE OF PUNGENT MISERY. May my sad fate prove a warning to others, not to follow a career of folly and dissipation. The old maxim, 'a short life and a merry one,' is false philosophy. ALL WHO WOULD BE TRULY HAPPY, MUST DEVOTE THEIR ENERGIES TO DOING GOOD. . . . . Write to my father; please write immediately. . . . . 'Tis hard to tear ones-self from the tender associations of life, to rush

unprepared into eternity! . . . Make such use of my name and fate as may best tend to prove a warning to others. *Eternity is yet to be measured.* AWFUL MUST BE THE FATE AWAITING ME! Farewell forever! Again and again good-bye, good-bye, my dear, dear friend."

What a waste of life, of talents and opportunities, and what an illustration of many important truths of God's word! "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." "The sorrow of the world worketh death." How little do men think what an end they are often preparing themselves for by what they call "a merry life," and what insuperable obstacles they are accumulating in the way of salvation by the evil habits they are forming. Let young men remember that every indulgence in sin tends to enslave them, and that ere they are

aware they involve themselves in bondage to sin and Satan beyond all hope of escape. Said this young man, "No power *on earth* could have prevented it,"—i. e. his destruction—and he had passed the boundary of God's mercy! How little did he once dream that he should die a suicide's death. He would have said with Hazael, had it been foretold, "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this great thing?"

And mark another thing, the testimony afforded by this young man as to "a life of pleasure" in the worldly sense. "I can truly state, AFTER FULL EXPERIENCE, *it is one continued scene of pungent misery.*" How exactly this corresponds with the declaration of Col. Gardiner, given in Dr. Doddridge's sketch, who was a "man of pleasure." "Once," said he, "in the height of my gayety and in the midst of company,

I wished myself like a dog on which my eye fell, which was more happy than I and not accountable." "The way of the transgressor is hard."

Poor young man! I shall never cease to pity thy fate, so much in contrast to the death of that other young man which I described in the previous sketch. How terrible the emotions this unfortunate suicide expressed in his exclamation, "Awful must be the fate awaiting me!" And how appalling that other thought which he uttered, "Eternity is yet to be measured!" Yes, and so it will be millions of years hence. How terse and how true, also, the declaration, as worthy of perpetuation in letters of brass, as anything I know in human language: "ALL WHO WOULD BE TRULY HAPPY MUST DEVOTE THEIR ENERGIES TO DOING GOOD."

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